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August 9, 2011

TO: Audit Committee

FROM: Wendy L. Watanabe  
Auditor-Controller

SUBJECT: **SUNSET REVIEW FOR THE MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY  
BOARD OF GOVERNORS**

**RECOMMENDATION**

The Audit Committee recommend to the Board of Supervisors (Board) to extend the Museum of Natural History's (Museum) Board of Governors (BOG) sunset review date to September 30, 2016.

**BACKGROUND**

The Board established and has continued the BOG pursuant to Los Angeles County Code Chapter 2.94. The Board approved the most recent sunset review extension in March 2001.

Under the County Code, the BOG directs the Museum's operations under the management of the Museum's Director (Director). The BOG's duties also include:

- Creating policies for the Museum in conjunction with the Director, and determining the Museum's goals and programs (e.g., exhibits, facility improvement projects, etc.).
- Advising the Board on Museum-related matters, including programs and goals.
- Promoting the Museum's image, and its cultural and educational activities to the public.

- Serving as the Museum's representative when working with other regional, national or international institutions, from which the Museum may become a direct or indirect beneficiary.

Although the County Code does not establish a meeting frequency for the BOG, the BOG's bylaws state that the BOG should meet annually. The annual meeting is primarily intended to update County exhibits/collections, and to discuss matters of special interest to the County. BOG members also serve as ex-officio members of the Board of Trustees of the private Natural History Museum Foundation (Foundation), which meets quarterly. The Board of Trustees and BOG provide oversight for the Museum's use of both Foundation and County resources.

The BOG has 15 members, three appointed by each Supervisor. BOG members do not receive compensation. During the review period, the BOG did not incur any expenses.

### **JUSTIFICATION**

The BOG met four times between July 2007 and September 2009 (approximately twice a year), with an average attendance of 7.8 (52%) members. The BOG indicated that its low average attendance is partly due to unfilled vacancies, which have been partially addressed by recent Board appointments. We noted that, although the BOG's average attendance was low, the BOG successfully fulfilled its duties.

The BOG's accomplishments during the review period included the following:

- Helped raise over \$85 million for the Museum's "Next" project, a multi-phase capital improvement project, that includes upgrading the Museum's buildings (built in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century), installing seven exhibit galleries, and constructing a parking structure and other visitor amenities, such as a café and gift shop.
- Approved the transfer of Native American remains and artifacts from County collections to tribal groups in accordance with federal law.
- Negotiated an expiring site lease with the State to extend the Museum's right to occupy the Museum's main site until 2081.
- Worked with the Board to extend the operating/funding agreement between the County and the Foundation to 2081, ensuring adequate funding support for the Museum for the duration of the extended site lease.
- Approved updates to the Museum's Code of Ethics.

The BOG's objectives for the next review period are to:

- Continue associations with the community, the County and the Foundation to enhance Museum success.
- Continue public outreach and fund raising for the Museum's "Next" capital improvement project.
- Assist with planning and implementing the Museum's 2013 centennial activities.

Please call me if you have any questions, or your staff may contact Robert Campbell at (213) 253-0101.

WLW:JLS:RGC:TK

#### Attachments

c: Richard S. Volpert, President, Board of Governors, Natural History Museum  
Dr. Jane G. Pisano, Director, Natural History Museum  
Janet Logan, Chief, Board Operations  
Angie Johnson, Chief, Commission Services

**SUNSET REVIEW**  
**MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY BOARD OF GOVERNORS**  
**REVIEW COMMENTS**

**Mission.** (Does the mission statement agree with the Board of Supervisors' purpose and expectations?)

The stated mission is as set forth in the Board of Supervisors order establishing the Board of Governors (BOG). **CONCUR.**

**Section 1. Relevance.** (Is the mission still relevant and in agreement with the Board of Supervisors' purpose and expectations?)

The BOG creates Museum policies, goals and programs; provides management oversight for Museum operations; advises the Board of Supervisors (Board) on Museum operations; and promotes the Museum.

The BOG's mission appears to be **RELEVANT.**

**Section 2. Meetings and Attendance.** (Are required meetings held and is attendance satisfactory?)

Although BOG meeting frequency is not stated in the County Code, the BOG's bylaws state that the BOG should meet annually. The BOG met four times between July 2007 and September 2009 (approximately twice a year), with an average attendance of 7.8 (52%) members. The BOG indicated that its low average attendance is partly due to unfilled BOG vacancies, which has been partially addressed by recent Board appointments. We noted that, although the BOG's average attendance was low, the BOG successfully fulfilled its duties.

The BOG's meeting frequency is **SATISFACTORY**, while the BOG's attendance is **UNSATISFACTORY.**

**Sections 3 and 4. Accomplishments and Results.** (Are listed accomplishments and results significant?)

During this review period, the BOG's accomplishments included the following:

- Helped raise over \$85 million for the Museum's "Next" project, a multi-phase capital improvement project, that includes upgrading the Museum's buildings (built in 1913 and 1920's), installing seven exhibit galleries, and constructing a parking structure and other visitor amenities, such as a café and gift shop.
- Approved the transfer of Native American remains and artifacts from County collections to tribal groups in accordance with federal law.

- Negotiated an expiring site lease with the State to extend the Museum's right to occupy the Museum's main site until 2081.
- Worked with the Board to extend the operating/funding agreement between the County and the Foundation to 2081, ensuring adequate funding support for the Museum for the duration of the extended site lease.
- Approved updates to the Museum's Code of Ethics.

The BOG's accomplishments and results are **SIGNIFICANT**.

**Section 5. Objectives.** (Are the objectives compatible with the mission and goals and relevant within the current County environment?)

The Commission's objectives for the next review period are to:

- Continue associations with the community, the County and the Foundation to enhance Museum success.
- Continue public outreach and fund raising for the Museum's "Next" capital improvement project.
- Assist with planning and implementing the Museum's 2013 centennial activities.

The Board of Governors' future objectives appear **RELEVANT**.

**Section 6. Resources.** (Are the resources utilized by the entity in support of the entity's activities warranted in terms of the accomplishments and results?)

BOG members do not receive compensation. During the review period, the BOG did not incur any expenses.

The BOG's expenses appear to be **WARRANTED**.

**Section 7. Recommendation.**

**EXTEND THE SUNSET REVIEW DATE FOR THE MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY BOARD OF GOVERNORS TO SEPTEMBER 30, 2016.**

**Museum of Natural History Board of Governors  
Attendance Record**

| Commissioner                   | Nominated by: | 9/30/07  | 9/30/08  | 12/31/08  | 9/30/09  | Totals    | % Attended |
|--------------------------------|---------------|----------|----------|-----------|----------|-----------|------------|
| Number of Meetings per Quarter |               |          |          |           |          |           |            |
| Carlos C. Barron               | 1st District  | 1        | 1        | 1         | 1        | 4         |            |
| Mark Wayne Dundee              | 1st District  | 1        | 1        | 1         | 1        | 1         | 100%       |
| Julio Ramirez, Jr.             | 1st District  | 0        | 0        | 1         | 1        | 4         | 100%       |
| Nicholas H. Stonnington        | 1st District  | 1        | 1        | 1         | 1        | 1         | 33%        |
| Kenneth W. Bentley             | 2nd District  | 1        | 0        | 0         | 1        | 4         | 100%       |
| Shannon L. Faulk               | 2nd District  | 1        | 1        | 1         | 1        | 1         | 33%        |
| Marilyn F. Solomon             | 2nd District  | 1        | 0        | 0         | 0        | 1         | 50%        |
| Vacant                         | 2nd District  | 0        | 0        | 1         | 1        | 1         | 33%        |
| Vacant                         | 2nd District  | 1        | 0        | 1         | 0        | 0         | 0%         |
| David Comsky                   | 3rd District  | 1        | 0        | 1         | 1        | 1         | 50%        |
| Ki Suh Park                    | 3rd District  | 1        | 1        | 1         | 0        | 3         | 75%        |
| Robert Simonds                 | 3rd District  | 1        | 1        | 1         | 1        | 1         | 100%       |
| Richard S. Volpert, Esq.       | 3rd District  | 1        | 1        | 1         | 1        | 4         | 100%       |
| Vacant                         | 3rd District  | 1        | 1        | 0         | 1        | 0         | 0%         |
| Arun K. Bhumitra               | 4th District  | 0        | 1        | 1         | 1        | 3         | 75%        |
| Howard E. Chambers             | 4th District  | 1        | 0        | 1         | 0        | 2         | 50%        |
| Curtis C. Jung                 | 4th District  | 0        | 0        | 0         | 1        | 1         | 25%        |
| Simon Wen Shao                 | 5th District  | 1        | 0        | 1         | 0        | 2         | 50%        |
| Bettina Korek                  | 5th District  | 0        | 0        | 1         | 1        | 1         | 33%        |
| Richard Sun                    | 5th District  | 0        | 0        | 0         | 0        | 0         | 0%         |
| Vacant                         | 5th District  | 1        | 1        | 1         | 0        | 0         | 0%         |
| <b>Totals</b>                  |               | <b>9</b> | <b>5</b> | <b>10</b> | <b>7</b> | <b>31</b> |            |
| Average Attendance per Meeting |               |          |          |           |          |           | 7.8        |

**Legend:**

  Vacancy filled or Commissioner did not serve during this period.